GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ATOMIC ENERGY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3948
ANSWERED ON:20.04.2005
RECOVERY OF URANIUM
Madhwaraj Smt. Manorama;Malhotra Prof. Vijay Kumar;Patil Shri Balasaheb Vikhe;Yadav Shri Ram Kripal

Will the Minister of ATOMIC ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether police found radioactive uranium in possession of two persons arrested at Bareilly;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the sources from which uranium reached into unauthorized hands; and

(d) the steps taken to prevent recurrence of such incidents?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER`S OFFICE (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN):
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(a)&(b) Yes, Sir. The material seized by the police authorities at Bareilly was a small plate-shaped piece of Depleted Uranium(DU). The gamma radiation level on the surface of the piece is too small which reduces to background at short distance of 40 cm. Thus the seized piece cannot cause radiation or health hazard of any significance.

(c) The exact source of the DU piece seized is not known. DU being a high-density material, is used as a shielding material in the imported industrial radiography cameras and radiotherapy units in hospitals and as a counterweight in aircraft. From the shape and size of the seized piece, it appears that the piece could be part of a counterweight in an aircraft.

(d) In India, aircraft maintenance workshops are aware of the requirements for disposal of such DU counterweight material. Accordingly they contact Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) and Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), when there is need for safe disposal of such pieces.